

1 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Coral Wyche?

2 (No response.)

3 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Dennis Howard?

4 (No response.)

5 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Butch Tam?

6 (No response.)

7 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Frances Grubaugh?

8 (No response.)

9 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Gee, we did good to start.

10 Bill Biossat? I'm sorry if I butchered your name,  
11 sir. Thank you for being here, particularly today.

12 MR. BIOSSAT: Thank you very much. Actually, I  
13 enjoyed the Commission meeting in Biloxi yesterday, and I want to  
14 thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Commission for  
15 allowing me to speak.

16 My name is William Biossat. I'm a 26-year law  
17 enforcement veteran, 23 years with the Louisiana State Police,  
18 ten of those years was with the Organized Crime Intelligence  
19 Division; also, I was director of gaming enforcement for the  
20 state police, the first deputy director of the Attorney General's  
21 Office Gaming Division in Louisiana, and started up that Gaming  
22 Division; as well as the first executive director of the  
23 Riverboat Gaming Commission.

24 I say that in that I think that my background gives  
25 me maybe some insight on illegal gambling, the casino gaming that  
26 may be somewhat different than others may be. My current  
27 position, I'm corporate director of Regulatory Relations for  
28 Casino American; we own three of the riverboats here in

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1 Louisiana, and we're proud to be the largest riverboat gaming  
2 operator in the state.

3 That being said -- and I'm not going to take up a lot  
4 of your time because I know you've had a long couple of days and  
5 the weather is what it is -- but I did want to make a few  
6 comments.

7 The State of Louisiana of course does have an  
8 extensive background, long-term background with organized crime  
9 involvement; however, in the riverboat gaming industry or the  
10 legal gaming industry in this state, the Louisiana State Police  
11 does extensive background and suitability investigations on  
12 gaming operators, the employees of the riverboats, and video  
13 poker entities. Also, there was a comment made today, or a  
14 question, I think, by Mr. deBueys about the vendors or that  
15 organized crime may try to infiltrate casino gaming through being  
16 vendors, but our vendors are also subjected to background  
17 investigations by the Louisiana State Police, and they give us a  
18 printout on who is permitted and who is not, and those are the  
19 entities that we in fact do business with.

20 In my opinion, based on my background in law  
21 enforcement and as a gaming regulator, and from being in the  
22 gaming industry, is the biggest threat to the public health,  
23 safety and welfare in this state, and probably in the country, is  
24 from illegal gambling which is unlicensed, unregulated and  
25 untaxed.

26 In 1989 when I was with the Louisiana State Police  
27 Organized Crime Intelligence Section and a gaming regulator, we  
28 conducted raids on illegal bookmaking operations in this state in

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1 a one-year period of time, and through records seized it was  
2 documented that there was over a billion dollars a year being  
3 wagered in illegal sports bets in this state alone.

4 Also, we did extensive investigations and raids on  
5 other illegal forms of gambling which led to some of the  
6 testimony that I provided to the Louisiana Legislature because  
7 what I saw was that there were certain forms of gambling that  
8 could not be controlled and for it to be regulated, taxed would  
9 be better for the public health, safety and welfare than leaving  
10 it to go on its own.

11 There was some questions that came up today regarding  
12 why nothing is done about the illegal gambling, and in this state  
13 the problems were that there were virtually no criminal  
14 penalties, as in a \$250 fine and six months in jail, and if  
15 someone is doing a million dollars in illegal sports book in a  
16 month, then the idea that you're going to hurt them with a \$250  
17 fine is certainly ludicrous.

18 And there's been almost no prosecution from the  
19 courts in illegal gambling enforcement over the years, and that  
20 kind of led to my idea and beliefs that legalization and  
21 regulation of gambling was probably better than leaving things  
22 the way they were with what we had to deal with at that time.

23 The casinos, I have found in this state, and probably  
24 nationally, are very compliance oriented. They go to great  
25 lengths to ensure that they comply with the law, not only the  
26 spirit but intent of the law, and they go to great lengths to  
27 hire minorities and women. In fact, in this state it's been a  
28 great asset to women and minorities because they have been in

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1 either much lower paying jobs or unemployed and now they in fact  
2 do have decent, well-paying jobs and health insurance and the  
3 things that go with that.

4 I know I've probably gone over the three minutes. I  
5 did want to make those few comments and I did give the written  
6 comments and I would hope that you do take the time to look at  
7 them because I do feel like with my background, my perspective is  
8 maybe different than some that you may have heard. Thank you  
9 very much.

10 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: I assure you that we will look  
11 at the written submission and it will be shared with the other  
12 commissioners. Thank you very much, Mr. Blossat, appreciate your  
13 being here.

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